RIAP BULLETIN

Volume 8, Number 1–2 **January—June 2002**

Research Institute on Anomalous Phenomena (RIAP) is an independent scientific research body, established in 1992 by the Kharkov-based aerospace company *Vertical* and aimed at scientific studies in the fields of non-traditional energy sources, the problem of anomalous atmospheric phenomena and the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) question.

*We study:
anomalous phenomena.
We consider:
any theories.
We accept:
normal proofs,
exact references.*

CONTENTS

Published Quarterly by Research Institute on Anomalous Phenomena (RIAP)
P.O.Box 4542, 61022 Kharkov-22, UKRAINE
Printed and Distributed by Frontier Sciences Foundation
P.O.Box 372, 8250 AJ Dronten, THE NETHERLANDS
Website: http://www.fsf.nl Subscription: <info@fsf.nl>

A THOUSAND YEARS OF RUSSIAN UFOs (Part II)

Mikhail B. Gershtein

4. Aeronautical Period

4.1. The Wave of 1892

Reports about supposedly technogeneous objects, including those closely resembling present-day UFOs, came to surface only during the first great "wave" of observations of "mysterious balloons" over Russia and Europe (January-July of 1892, some 200 reports) that produced a significant international response.

The very first reports of the "wave" that marked the outset of the Aeronautical period arrived from the western border of Russia. At night, there appeared over the frontier provinces strange globes—sometimes luminous or carrying "lights" on their bodies, sometimes dark. When newspapers began to publish reports about mysterious flights, it turned out that the preceding year these globes had already been observed, but were taken for test flights by Russian aeronauts.

On February 26 (hereafter, unless otherwise specified, the dates are given by the Gregorian calendar) at about 5.30 p.m. an "enormous globe", or a "balloon", appeared at a "very considerable altitude" above the Polish *posad* (a settlement) of Dabrowa, moving towards the railway leading from Dabrova to Ivangorod. The witnesses were especially astonished by the fact that the "balloon" flew against the wind. That day, the wind blew from the north, but the "balloon" was nevertheless flying to the north-east! "The ball vanished out of sight for some time,—reported the newspaper *Wiek*,—but some 40 minutes later it reappeared, being this time illuminated and flying in the opposite direction." Such maneuverability made the journalist assume that "...the balloon was provided with the most up-to-date aeronautic equipment, operated by an experienced crew, and flew from Prussian Silesia". (Quoted from: [38])

The Germans were immediately accused of "unlawful flights across the border":

"The other day, over the fortress of Kovno (within its urban section), a fortress sentinel detected a balloon that rose from the direction of the Prussian border,—wrote the newspaper *Novosti*.—The fortress authorities ordered the sentinels to fire their rifles at the balloon, hoping to "bring down" this "bird". When this proved, however, to be fruitless, they gave instructions to point a long-range gun at the balloon; at the sight of this gun it swiftly rushed over the Prussian border and landed there. The fortress of Kovno, built six to seven years ago, has a formidable look, being of rather considerable dimensions: it was erected according to a new system—by separate redoubts, spread out in different directions towards the Prussian frontier along the river Neman, covering a space of more than 50 versts [53 km, or 33 miles,—*M. G.*]. It is quite understandable and absolutely natural that at present our dear neighbors are interested in this fortress, and because they are not allowed to enter the fortress itself, it only remains for them to admire it *nolens volens* from a bird's eye view, through a spyglass." [39]

On that side of the frontier the Germans were, in their turn, certain it was Russian aeronauts who flew in the sky. The newspaper *Czas*, issued in Cracow, published the following report from the Volyn province:

"In our territory from time to time appear balloons rather swiftly traversing the air space. They move constantly in the same direction—along the railway line Rovno-Zdolbunow-Radziwillow. In the evening, these balloons emit shafts of light, very similar to electrical. On March 17, about 10 p.m. and in good weather, the present author saw a brightly illuminated balloon moving in the direction of the Austrian frontier. We cannot properly explain the aim of these aerial excursions. Local inhabitants see in these events the hand of the Germans; but, in all probability, these balloons belong to the Russian army, being launched from local fortresses for test purposes in anticipation of a possible war." (Quoted from: [40])

On February 29, according to a correspondent of the *Wiek* newspaper, "at 7.30 p.m., there again appeared over [Gornicza] Dabrowa a balloon moving from the south-west to the north and then coming back. This balloon was illuminated by electric light. Two reflectors cast onto the ground two perpendicular shafts of light that illuminated a quite considerable space. The balloon stopped at some considerable altitude, where it stood still for about 40 minutes." (Quoted from: [41].)

The first official report in a government newspaper was made on March 18. *Grodno Provincial Gazette* informed its readers that "...on Sunday, March 15, at sunset, from the direction of the town of Augustow of the Suwalki province (from Lososna) there appeared a balloon that stood still for about half an hour over the camp at Grodno and the nearby forts, then it moved towards the town and stopped, at last, to the north-west of it—above the other forts, located near the *urochishche* of Pyshkov. Strong beams of electric light were emitted downward; they brightened and dimmed very often and their source changed its location within the balloon. Therefore, it was definitely a manned balloon. At 8.45 p.m. the

balloon started its motion to the west, and at 9.15 it was no longer seen.

Next day, March 16, at the beginning of twilight, the balloon appeared again; it hovered over the town for rather a long time. On March 17, at about 7 a.m., it flew above Grodno anew, being seen absolutely clearly." (See Ref. 42.)

The Grodno stronghold was, however, not the only fortress that interested the unknown visitors. Thus, on March 24, over the fortress of Dinamind, situated near Riga, there appeared a "bright luminous body", as large as "an average plate (!—*M. G.*), that emitted light beams to the ground" [43].

On April 4, above Dinamind "...after nine o'clock in the evening, in calm weather and under an almost cloudless sky, a bright star came from the north-west that gradually increased in size and reached, while approaching, the size of a half of a small melon (according to some witnesses), or the size of an inflated [gutta-percha] balloon—according to other ones. The light resembled an electrical one and was so bright that it was impossible to look at it for a long time. The light disk now increased, now diminished, and sometimes it faded completely for a few moments. Especially brightly illuminated was the dome of a church—when the light was directed at it. A cloud that approached the body looked translucent as under the full moon. Having hovered over the fortress for about half an hour, the luminous body moved in the direction of the forts, above which it also stopped for a short while and then disappeared in the north-west. Many people saw and observed this body that evening; it remained above the fortress for about one and a half of an hour." [44]

Rizhskiy Vestnik (Riga's Herald) added that the "star", while moving away "...described a broken line, now ascending, now descending; it stopped successively over the forts of the fortress... In Riga some people also watched its flight over the fortress." [45]

The avalanche of reports about mysterious objects in the sky increased swiftly. "From the Kovno, Warsaw, Volyn, Petrokov, Keletsk, Suwalki, Grodno, Minsk, and even Kiev provinces, in all provincial and metropolitan newspapers there are published reports of the same content",—remarked a commentator of *Severniy Vestnik* (Northern Herald) newspaper [46]. True, the objects supposed to be "balloons" were by no means exclusively spherical in shape. Here is a report from Vinnitsa:

"On March 25, at 10 p.m. in the north-western part of the firmament there appeared some luminous object of an angular shape, surrounded by bright light that resembled an electrical one. This object stood still at the same point of the firmament for a few minutes, after which it slowly moved on, looking as if it was descending to the ground, and [then] disappeared completely. Some 15 minutes later the same phenomenon could be seen at another place; this time the enigmatic object circling in various directions was seen for a whole hour, and then, at 11 p.m., it vanished completely. Many people believe that the above-described phenomenon was nothing but a foreign balloon, but we cannot judge whether or not this assumption is sufficiently justified." [47]

Sharp maneuvers and bright lights are mentioned in the following letter as well:

"On March 26, in the evening, about 9 p.m., at Berdichev, general attention was paid to a large star that appeared over the horizon, shining with an unusual light,—wrote a certain B. Sh.— When observed, it proved to be moving, to a great amazement of the observers. First, it moved directly from the west, then turned to the south, its turn having been made at a right angle. Some time later it digressed a little to the north and stopped. At this place it remained about an hour and therefore it could be thoroughly examined. With the naked eye one could see bifurcated light emitted by the star, its beams changing direction frequently. But when a spyglass was used for observation, the star proved to be an aerostat of enormous dimensions and having two strong electrical reflectors. On either side of the balloon there were two huge lanterns, one of them red and the other green. When the crowd observing the star with the naked eye became aware that this was a balloon, there was no boundary to their amazement. This caused a great deal of talk. Some people were amazed at the inventiveness of man who proved to be capable to solve the problem of controlled balloon flight, others feared that this new confirmation of the perseverance and inventiveness of the human mind could lead to a new war. While these talks and conjectures were discussed, the balloon quietly hovered in the air—sometimes descending and immediately after that swiftly climbing again. It was situated at a very considerable height. As for its distance from the town, it was hardly more than 10 to 12 *versts*. At 10.30 p.m. the balloon slowly (for a naked eye) started to come back. But suddenly it swiftly turned to the west and a few minutes later disappeared from sight." [48]

A commentator of the newspaper *Svet* (World) tried to look into the stories and newspaper items that had fallen into his hands.

"Observations of the unknown "luminary", or "meteor", or even "comet" (as some folk believe), or maybe even balloons (in the opinion of other people) have formed for the last week a body of data that allow one to group together several rather typical and common traits of this new phenomenon, dispersed in records of various observers from different localities.

"The first series of the sightings is dated at March 15, 16, and 17. [This is not so, though. The first dated report was obtained on February 26.—*M. G.*] The phenomenon was then observed in the Kovno and Augustow provinces, as well as in Warsaw, Grodno, and Lutsk (of the Volyn province). The objects appeared about 7 p.m. in Augustow, and about 8 p.m. in Grodno; they began to move away in the westerly direction at 8.45 p.m. and disappeared at 9.15 p.m. (Grodno). At 7 a.m. (Grodno) and at 7.30 p.m. (Seyny) they reappeared, moving to the west. After that, during five days—from March 18 to March 22 inclusive—nothing has been heard about these "balloons" or "luminaries". Probably, they were nowhere observed. [This is not so either. On March 20, an enigmatic object was seen in Berdichev and Voronezh, on March 21 at the station of Valily of the Kiev province, on March 22 above Dubno.—*M. G.*] However, after this pause, there followed, from March 23 till March 29 inclusive, a new series of observations, now covering two belts—broader and shifting farther to the east. The first of these belts included the cities of Lutsk, Pinsk, Minsk, and Vilno, that are respectively 63 *versts*, 238 *versts*, 400 *versts*, and 160 *versts* from our frontier. The second belt of observations embraces the town of Vinnitsa, Kiev, and Vitebsk. <...> On March 23, a ball was observed at the village of Zmeinets, at 6.30 p.m.

"On March 25, at 10 p.m., as is reported in a letter from Vinnitsa published by *Odesskiy Listok* (Odessa News-Sheet), there appeared in the north-western part of the firmament a luminous object of an angular shape <...>. On March 26, as the *Novosti* (News) newspaper reports, many people saw a balloon rushing over Pinsk. Next day, March 27, when evening came and the sky was absolutely clear, a whole crowd watched from a Pinsk square the appearance of a luminous body, which, in the opinion of the correspondent, was "nothing but a comet noteworthy for its swift motion and soft radiant light", it was moving in the north-west direction (towards Grodno) and was seen for about two hours. The "comet" vanished about midnight. The same day, March 26, <...> at 11 p.m. a luminous ball for the first time appeared above the city of Vitebsk and swiftly flew to the west, despite a strong north-eastern wind.

"Next day, March 27, when twilight had just begun (that is, after 7 p.m.), a ball reappeared over Vitebsk and circled above the city for a long time.

"Finally, on March 29, about 8 p.m., in Vitebsk was seen a similar ball, now moving to the south. Shining all the time of its flight with red light, it sometimes "suddenly took the shape of a comet with a tail" and fifteen minutes later vanished, after which it reappeared in its previous shape. Apart from the correspondent, many other people also observed this phenomenon.

"On March 27, at about 4 p.m., according to G. M. Bernov, a correspondent of *Novosti*, the inhabitants of the settlement of Vasilkov (Belostok district, Grodno province) saw in the clear starry sky a "luminous point" that appeared in the north-west and was taken by Mr. Bernov for a star, "being however three to four times bigger than any star". A distinguishing feature of this luminous point was its strange behavior: "after stopping at the same place, it suddenly dimmed out"; besides, it "reappeared now here, now at another place".

"We have also obtained two reports from Minsk. According to one of them, on March 29, at 11 p.m. the author of the report, a second lieutenant of the 30th Artillery Brigade, observed above the city of Minsk a luminous point "larger than a comet", emitting to the ground a bright light in two beams. The light now dimmed, now brightened. A similar phenomenon was also observed on March 27 and 28. Another Minsk correspondent of our newspaper reports that on March 28, at 9.30 p.m. he observed a ball that appeared above the city and was flying, as far as the observer could determine through his field-glasses, at an altitude not less than 1.5 *versts*. The ball cast a fan-shaped shaft of bright electrical light, slightly oscillating from side to side. The intensity of the light also changed periodically. It was possible to discern through the field-glasses, even though not quite clearly, the dark upper part of the luminous body that was shaped like a normal balloon. The ball appeared above Minsk instantaneously; then, some time later, it started moving to the west until it completely faded away in the distance at about 10 p.m. This phenomenon was observed by many people who were in the streets.

"Lastly, *Kievskoye Slovo* (Kiev Word) newspaper reports that the other day a ball was seen in Kiev. <...>. Thus, over a period of seven days the ball, or the "luminary", was observed at eight locations, over a distance of 1400 *versts* in an arc, its chord being 460 *versts*. The overall number of the observations is fourteen. The balls appeared between sunset, that is 7.30 p.m., and 6.30 a.m. in the west, north-west, and in the east. They moved from the east to the west, from the west to the south-east, from the south to the north-west, as well as to the south, east, and west. In all reports the "luminary" is described as sufficiently large and emitting (always only downward, in the direction of the ground) a shaft or two of electrical light, that were emitted by a luminous point. This light periodically changed its intensity and altered its color. One can also conclude from the reports that the shape of the observed body was more conical or angular than round; it moved very fast at an altitude of about 1.5 *versts*, what

is equal to the altitude of the flight of cranes. This luminous body could single out a settlement, then stand still or circle over it." [49]

The author of this article—a certain Vs. K-iy—mentions the sighting of March 23, 1892—when at the village of Zmeinets was for the first time seen a silvery "flying machine" shaped like a "haycock", that is a disk or a dome. Captain of cavalry N. wrote to the military journal *Razvedchik* (Scout), 1892, No. 3, that the "machine moved cleaving the air and therefore, as I think, its sound was due to the work of the mechanism. This sound resembled that of a distant train, or a windmill... Those people who saw the machine, say that it was light-metallic in color, with glitter."

Some observations from this set must certainly have been due to misidentifications of Venus—the brightest planet in the sky that was then at its maximum brilliance. Yet in some reports Venus was specially mentioned as a reference point to mark the location of the strange object in the sky. Thus, the Belostok correspondent of *Novosti* emphasized that the object "...appeared [in the sky] almost simultaneously with Venus and even before the latter", being "larger than Venus by six to seven times and emitting the light as intense as one can see from the full moon on a very clear night, but with a whole shaft of radiant electrical rays." [50]

According to a report from Yampol', on April 12 there appeared a luminous body that maneuvered and "emitted shafts of electrical light to its sides". And when twilight came, "...there appeared in the firmament, somewhat further to the north-west from it, in all its beauty the star Venus as well; but meanwhile, the "ball" still remained in the firmament, outshining the latter with its brightness and size." [51]

On April 3, 1892, a UFO called by journalists "a comet" was detected above Kishinev "in the south-west, somewhat to the left of Venus and below it", where it rotated for about an hour [52].

Little by little, diplomatic complications between Russia and Germany were advancing. First, the leading German newspapers published refutations, explaining that Berlin had at its disposal no dirigible balloons. Then it turned out that mysterious objects were observed in the German Empire as well.

"The mysterious balloons that have up to now been giving rise to a lot of talk in this country do worry the Germans as well. They believe that if these luminous bodies materializing at night for a short time and disappearing in the west are not meteors, then they must be the enemy's (Russian, or French) balloons. What is the nature of this phenomenon, after all? Those who are convinced of the deceitful behavior of our neighbors—supposedly spying out from an altitude our fortifications at night—will be irritated when discovering that their conclusions are wrong and they should look for another solution of this mystery." [53]

In March of 1892 P. S. Vannovskiy, Minister of War of the Russian Government, issued an order to the Aeronautical Section of the Russian Technological Society (AS RTS) to "look into the question and to report". Although the heads of the Aeronautical Section decided for themselves in advance that the observations of "German balloons" were nothing but rubbish (its chief General M. M. Boreskov said in an interview that this was "utter nonsense or a mystification" [54]), the specialists in aeronautics started their inquiry. But it was politically necessary to calm down the masses. That is why there was arranged, as soon as April 14, a special meeting, at which the most prominent Russian specialists in aeronautics—M. M. Pomortsev and A. M. Kovan'ko—read a paper "About flights of balloons on our western frontier according to existing data". The leading Russian newspapers published reports about this meeting (see, for example, Ref. 55).

Kovan'ko said that "...the information sent in by correspondents should be ascribed to errors of observation". As for Pomortsev, he has examined all reports he had got, comparing them with weather maps: could free balloons fly into the Russian air space, using suitable air streams? When analyzing this question, he rejected as "utterly absurd" the reports about simultaneous observations of these balloons in different settlements, as well as information about flights against the wind! But even after such a biased selection the results obtained proved to be rather interesting: the flights dated February 28 and March 15 were in good accordance with weather maps, the flight dated March 11 also corresponded to them to some extent, but "as for all other flights described in the newspapers, these were due to pure fantasy and mistakes".

Nevertheless, none of the experts ventured to accuse all the eyewitnesses of astronomical ignorance or of mass psychosis, leaving themselves a loophole for a retreat: "...there will be no harm in looking at this affair more seriously,—wrote they,—Venus and comets were certainly seen, but Prussian aerostats using suitable meteorological conditions [for their flights] could have been seen as well."

It seems that the aeronauts themselves knew well the real value of their words.

The inquiry went on nevertheless at a slow pace. Kovan'ko and Pomortsev sent out to all "competent persons of Western Territory" a so-called "circular invitation" (that is, a reporting form) asking them to keep a watch on the objects, and to send "facts only" to St.Petersburg [56].

Even though after the "debunking" articles in

newspapers the fuss declined, new reports did from time to time reach their editorial offices. Some of them were coming from such distant places that it was very difficult to accuse the "Germans" of those incidents. Search for other candidates was not in vain, however: in Transcaucasia the British were considered as the culprits.

I shall give just one more report here as an example from the second half of the UFO wave of 1892 (after the AS RTS meeting), written by a Mr. P. V. Kladno. It has especially attracted my attention since the UFO was seen over now-infamous Chernobyl.

"On the night of April 21–22 of this year, I was returning from a business trip to my place of residence, the settlement of Narodichi. But since... I should have crossed a river at a ford, and it was night, I decided to wait for dawn on the bank. Having told the carter to unharness the horses and let them graze, I sat down on the cart. At this time I saw a luminous spark and said: look, people of Narodichi get up, it will soon be morning; but suddenly this spark turned into a vast light that illuminated the church, houses, and all the environment. Gazing at the light, I could clearly make out a lower half of the ball and under it an elongated, narrow, black thing, in the middle of which, somewhat lower, there shone an enormous circle, shaped like the sun. The ball was flying from the east to the west, upstream from the direction of the settlements of Chernobyl and Khabno. I saw all this so distinctly that nobody can convince me any longer that these objects are meteors, and not balloons. My carter, named Kulikov, was frightened so much that he did not wish to move away from me even by a step and repeated: "Oh, God, they will take me away, now!" The flight altitude was, as it seemed to me, a little above our belfry. The balloon was flying for about half an hour and then left for the west, upstream the river. At that time I regretted that I had no rifle at hand: it would be fine to shoot at these aeronauts and to demonstrate to the skeptics that this was a balloon with living people, not a meteor or a star." [57]

4.2. An Interlude

In the years 1893–1896 UFOs ("strange phenomena" and "mysterious balloons") appeared over Russia rather as an exception. Here are, however, some reports about such sightings.

On July 27, 1893, over Uglich, "almost horizontally and very low above the ground" there flew a "meteor". It resembled "...a star with a tail or a rocket emitting a whole shower of sparks. The meteor itself was shaped like an elongated oval, two to four *vershoks* [9 to 18 cm,—*M. G.*] in size. Behind the oval there was a light strip about ten *sazhens* [20 meters] long. At the point where this strip was connected to the oval it was about eight times wider than the oval itself, looking like an enormous shaft of light. The nearer to the opposite end, the narrower and dimmer was this light strip, so that its very end looked like a dim point." [58]

In October 1893 there was seen over Helsingfors (now Helsinki) a "fiery ball gradually descending and increasing in size. The ball was surrounded by a bluish-green glow, whose green component became more visible as the ball was descending. This curious phenomenon lasted for a few minutes." [59]

On February 16, 1894, over the town of Novogrudka (Minsk province) "...at 10 p.m. there took shape in the firmament a large light-red strip that began then to slowly ascend to the north, reddening more and more; two hours after its appearance [that is, at midnight,—*M. G.*] this strip, emitting bright red light, vanished beyond the horizon." [60]

This event seems to have occurred too late to be explainable in terms of illumination of clouds by the sun from beyond the horizon.

A most interesting event happened on November 25, 1894, above the Grodno province. A report from the settlement of Porozovo of the Volkovysk district reads: "...During calm, foggy and dull weather, after a light snowfall, the firmament was in a trice covered with bright bluish-white light, resembling a Bengal light. This light appeared in the south-west and moved to the north-west, where it disappeared, about half a minute later. Immediately after that, and at the same place, a clap of thunder was heard, but this thunder was not a usual one: it roared incessantly for four minutes and the sound of the thunder moved in the same direction as the light did (it died away in the north-east), this sound being somewhat dull and resembling a drumbeat, or rather the sound that is produced by a carriage moving by a cobbled road.

Some time later, the lightning repeatedly flashed thrice in the west and with the same light, but without any thunder, and about 27 minutes after, there appeared in the north-west a cone-shaped light pillar with its sharp end pointed downwards.

A similar phenomenon was seen on November 8, towards 1 a.m., but it was shorter and not accompanied by thunder." [61]

Two weeks later in *Grodno Provincial Gazette* was published an explanation that made the whole picture even more peculiar:

"*Neue Dorpf. Zeitung* informs that in the evening of November 25, at the settlement of Deregin (Slonim district, Grodno province) it became as light as day, and a minute later was heard such a crash that the ground seemed to tremble. This thunder lasted for about a minute. Everyone thought it was a thunderstorm, but two days later, everything was clarified. As it turned out,

near the settlement of Rozhany, located at 23 *versts* from Slonim and 43 [*versts*] from Deregin, there fell an aerolite of enormous dimensions, the ground trembling as in an earthquake. In Slonim, window frames rattled and various household articles fell to the floor. According to the eyewitnesses, the aerolite is of enormous, unprecedented size." [62]

Sounds fine, but, to the best of my knowledge, no "enormous aerolite" (that is, meteorite) was discovered in 1894 in the territory of Russia. And even if the explanation of *Grodno Provincial Gazette* does correctly represent the facts, what about the light cone that flared half an hour *after* the "aerolite" fall?

In February of 1896 a UFO appeared over St.Petersburg. *Poruchik* [lieutenant] Heinz reported that "towards 1 a.m., I happened to note from the window of my flat on *Sredniy prospekt* [Middle Avenue] of Vasilyevsky island in the north-western part of the sky at the [angular] height of about 20 degrees over the horizon, a very bright luminous object of golden color, shaped like the moon in its first quarter, but much larger." Having approached the window, he saw this object slowly move to the west, gradually changing its shape: it was stretching horizontally and soon became elongated, with a bulge behind. Its surface was brightly golden, with even brighter dots. For two to three minutes it covered the whole space that could be seen from the window, some 40 degrees in length. Having gone behind a house, a gleam still remained to be seen for some time.

Geophysicist S. P. Glazenap and phenologist D. N. Kaygorodov assumed for some reason that "it had been a meteor—or rather two meteors flying almost in parallel to each other—one of them to the west of Russia and the other over the Tver, Novgorod, and Olonets provinces..." [63]

Some two months later, from Ashkhabad came a dispatch: "...on April 7, [1896], at 8 p.m., from Kaakhka station on the Transcaspian railway was observed a balloon crossing the state frontier between Russia and Persia. Supposedly, it was the English flying in the balloon and exploring Russian territory, illuminating it with electrical light. Whether or not the balloon landed, and at which place, remained unknown. The local authorities gave orders to organize a search for it." [64]

The well-known worldwide UFO wave of the years 1896–1897 that reached its maximum over North America in April 1897 did not affect Russia before the summer of that year. One should note that Russian UFO observations were not influenced by American ones—since in our newspapers there were practically no reports about the "mystery aircraft" craze in the United States. First reports about events of the Russian UFO wave of 1897 emerged only after the disappearance of Salomon Andrée and his two companions who tried to reach the North pole in a balloon. All eyewitnesses of strange aircraft wondered if the object they saw was Andrée's balloon.

The present author discussed this wave more than once (see, for example, Refs. 65 and 66). Here we will just note that in 1897 there came from various corners of the Russian Empire reports about night observations of luminous bodies and dark objects carrying lights, as well as those about objects seen in full day-light and having definite indications of their technogeneous nature ("angles", "plates", "wings", etc.) These reports are confirmed by urgent telegrams from Siberia that are still preserved today in the archives of the Russian Geographical Society.

After the bodies of the three aeronauts and their diaries were found in 1933, it became evident that Andrée and his companions had not entered the air space of the Russian Empire. Therefore, the objects seen by the eyewitnesses need to be explained in a different way.

4.3. The Flap of 1899

A small flap of UFO reports (it cannot be called a wave) occurred in 1899. Thus, on March 28 a strange body was seen over Arkhangelsk.

"At 8.25 p.m. an object lighted from inside and resembling a balloon flew slowly over the city,—wrote K. Amosov.—Its shape was rather unusual. The illuminated part of the balloon looked like a [kerosene,—*M. G.*] lamp, that is its globe-shaped base was extended upwards into a tall tube. Under the illuminated globe-shaped part one could see with the naked eye a boat of a sort, but only very vaguely, since by that time it was already quite dark. The balloon was moving slowly, but well below the clouds.

We grasped at once that it was not a meteor. We were watching the balloon's flight for about five minutes, until it vanished below the horizon. I would also like to add that the weather that evening was absolutely still, and the balloon emitted a reddish light like that from a red-hot stove."

The balloon flight was observed, apart from Amosov himself, also by baker's shop owner V. Z. Afanasiev, his son and wife, the employees of the Vologda railway V. Pfeif and T. Kozlov, Madam Fedorovich, and many other men and women. Amosov emphasized that all eyewitnesses were "quite educated people" [67].

The city newspaper *Arkhangelsk* put forward a supposition that it had been a toy hot-air balloon with a suspended brazier. However, there are reports that cannot be explained away so easily.

In a remote area of the country—the Russian Far East—"... in the settlement of Kamen'-Rybolov, on June 1, [1899], at 10.50 p.m. there appeared from the south a ball of blue color,

having 3/4 *arshins* [that is, about 50 cm,—*M. G.*] in diameter, that was moving northward, at a distance of not more than 300 *sazhens* [some 600 meters] from the steamship "Kazak Ussuriyskiy" that lay at anchor, and at the same altitude, traversing the firmament during 20 minutes and vanishing in the north. At 11.15 p.m. the ball reappeared from the north flying back to the south. It passed by the steamship at the same distance but moving faster and at 11.26 p.m. vanished in the south. This phenomenon was observed by the boatswain of the steamship—Cossack Alexey Burdinskiy, Ivan Stukov the stoker, and P. Y. Dmitriev the captain. While the ball was moving from the south to the north and back there was no noise, neither did the ball's color change. This was written down in the logbook." [68]

However, it was the mass observations of the enormous fiery bodies hovering over the Ukraine in November 1899 that made the greatest impression on the witnesses. In some localities these events caused a panic and expectations of the inevitable "end of the world". All attempts by scientists to explain this phenomenon in some way have failed.

References

38. Sensational news.—*Kievskoye Slovo*. Kiev, 1892, March 4.

39. *Novosti*. St.Petersburg, 1892, February 29.

40. The balloons.—*Kievlianin*. Kiev, 1892, March 24.

41. One more balloon.—*Kievlianin*. Kiev, 1892, March 7.

42. An aerostat over Grodno.—*Peterburgskaya Gazeta*. St.Petersburg, 1892, March 24.

43. A balloon over Dinamind.—*Rizhskiy Vestnik*. Riga, 1892, March 31.

44. *Vilenskiy Vestnik*. Vilno, 1892, April 16.

45. An extraordinary phenomenon.—*Rizhskiy Vestnik*. Riga, 1892, April 13.

46. A night alert in the south-west region.—*Severniy Vestnik*. St.Petersburg, 1892, No. 5.

47. *Odesskiy Listok*. Odessa, 1892, March 28.

48. *Odesskiye Novosti*. Odessa, 1892, March 29.

49. *Svet*. St.Petersburg, 1892, April 3.

50. *Novosti*. St.Petersburg, 1892, April 8.

51. *Odesskiye Novosti*. Odessa, 1892, April 16.

52. *Bessarabskiy Vestnik*. Kishinev, 1892, April 9.

53. Mysterious balloons.—*Odesskiy Vestnik*. Odessa, 1892, April 30.

54. The balloons.—*Kievskoye Slovo*. Kiev, 1892, March 27.

55. Modern aeronautics.—*Peterburgskaya Gazeta*. St.Petersburg, 1892, April 15.

56. *Odesskiy Listok*. Odessa, 1892, April 17.

57. *Svet*. St.Petersburg, 1892, May 9.

58. *Vilenskiy Vestnik*. Vilno, 1893, August 10.

59. *Novoye Vremia*. St.Petersburg, 1893, October 23.

60. *Vilenskiy Vestnik*. Vilno, 1894, February 22.

61. *Grodnenskiye Gubernskiye Vedomosti*. Grodno, 1894, December 3.

62. *Grodnenskiye Gubernskiye Vedomosti*. Grodno, 1894, December 17.

63. Pazin M. A UFO over St.Petersburg.—*Novosti Peterburga*. St.Petersburg, 2000, April 25—May 1.

64. The balloons again!—*Kievlianin*. Kiev, 1896, April 29.

65. Gershtein M. One balloon was launched and hundreds arrived.—*Anomaliya*. St.Petersburg, 1996, No. 11-12.

66. Gershtein M. *Those Who Got Lost in Time*. Moscow, 1999.

67. An enigmatic balloon.—*Kievlianin*. Kiev, 1899, April 17. (With reference to: *Severniy Kray* newspaper, Yaroslavl.)

68. *Vostochniy Vestnik*. Vladivostok, 1899, June 10.

MEN OF RUSSIAN UFOLOGY

YURIY FOMIN: SOME BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

From Moscow has come the sad news of the death of Yuriy Alexandrovich Fomin – the pioneer of ufological studies in the former USSR. Professor Fomin joined RIAP as far back as 1994 and participated actively in the institute's work during all these years, being a member of its Advisory Board. Only recently we discussed with him the prospects of our joint work, looking forward to further collaboration with this wonderful man and gifted researcher. Pity indeed that these plans will never materialize... Ars longa, vita brevis...

The following short memoir was sent to me by Yuriy Fomin a few months ago. It does seem informative and important enough to be published in RB. Of course, today we live in quite a different world, with different problems and opportunities – but the history of the UFO controversy in the former Soviet Union still can teach us something. First of all – we can make sure once again that one independent thinker may be more correct in his views than a legion of yes-men. Yuriy Fomin will for ever remain in our memory.

— Vladimir Rubtsov

I was born on September 8, 1923, in Moscow. At the beginning of 1943, during the Great Patriotic War, I was called up to the army and sent to the front. Participated in forcing the

Dnieper river, near Kremenchug, as well as in military operations in the territory of Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Austria. Having been demobilized late in 1946, I entered the Moscow Technological Institute of Food Industry. After finishing at the Mechanical Faculty of this institute, I worked there as an instructor.

In the mid-1950s, I was charged with giving lectures, on behalf of the All-Union Society for Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge (later renamed as the *Znaniye* Society), on space exploration at various secret research bodies, design bureaus, and other such institutions. At that time, this subject matter was at the peak of its popularity: the Soviet Union and the United States had just declared that they were going to launch the first artificial satellites. Soon, *Sputnik-1* blasted off from its launch pad, opening the space era in human history. It is small wonder that Soviet authorities attached great political importance to widely propagandizing this success.

Naturally enough, I compared in my lectures the state of the art of rocket technology in the USSR and the USA, considering the theory of space flight, as well as the prospects of future interplanetary travels, characteristics of planets, etc. The audiences were very interested in these questions, but a good part of these data (primarily technical, of course) was secret in this country and never appeared in the public press. That is why I had, when making preparations for my lectures, to use various foreign sources, including technical and popular journals and other periodicals. Often they contained information that was regarded as secret in the USSR. No wonder that my lectures were very popular both among specialists and lay people, being not infrequently perceived as a revelation of a sort.

In 1956, when reading some foreign journals, I met with reports about UFO observations. Ufology was an absolutely new and unfamiliar field for me. At that time nobody wrote in the Soviet press about this phenomenon. I became very interested and started to collect material on the UFO problem. After some hesitation, I even ventured to include certain parts of this information in my lectures—trying to be, at the same time, very circumspect. Usually I started with a standard phrase: "One can find in the foreign press the following reports..."—after which I proceeded to a brief survey of them. At the beginning I did not even evaluate the information critically, merely paraphrasing it.

As said above, my lectures were very popular in Moscow. My phone did not stop ringing: invitations to speak arrived from various parts of the city. As a rule, it was the UFO problem about which I was asked to talk in detail. During the years 1956–1960 I gave several hundred lectures at various Moscow organizations. It is certainly worthy of mention that at some gatherings there proved to be UFO witnesses who dared to talk about their unusual experiences. These were not only lay people, but also pilots, radar operators, rocket specialists, military men, and other professionals working at "post boxes" (usual Russian term designating a secret institution), military units, etc. Unfortunately, in most cases they refused to disclose their names, addresses, and positions in their organizations, or merely asked me not to mention their names in my lectures, being afraid of a possible negative reaction by their chiefs.

This idyll stopped abruptly on January 8, 1961. That day, the leading daily of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—*Pravda*—published a long interview with Academician L. A. Artsimovich titled "The Myth About 'Flying Saucers'". The Academician accused me of propagating antiscientific nonsense and other terrible crimes against Soviet science.

Reaction to the publication was not long in coming. I was immediately summoned to a meeting of the Party Bureau of the institute (although I never was a Communist Party member, nor even a member of the Young Communist League), where I was put through the mill of harsh criticism and severely condemned for my "antiscientific activities". The Bureau members also tried to find out if the same false ideas were contained in the course of lectures that I read to the institute students.

Soon, a similar procedure was organized at a District Committee of the Communist Party, many representatives of various scientific-technical bodies being called to this meeting. I was invited to give a lecture before this audience, and to talk about the UFO problem as well. Then the district Party authorities planned to arrange a "discussion" with a predetermined result—that is, my complete condemnation. But the real situation unexpectedly proved to be different. The participants did not rush to blame me; instead of that, they agreed that the ideas expressed in my lecture were worthy of attention and further development.

Such an unexpected turn in the discussion shocked the Secretary of the District Party Committee, who was in the chair, and he explained to the audience that they had not understood their main task: to blame the antiscientific—and therefore anti-Party—views of the lecturer, not to search for a grain of truth in this rubbish!

The next step was the withdrawal of my membership of the *Znaniye* society, carried through a city meeting of the society Presidium. After that I was summoned to the city Party Committee, where two journalists from the *Vechernyaya Moskva* newspaper were already present. After another portion of harsh criticism I was invited

to sign a letter of repentance to this newspaper, the text of which must have been written by the invited journalists. My task was just to give them some concrete facts to give the article greater verisimilitude.

After I declined this proposal, the debunking article appeared in *Vechernyaya Moskva* late in January 1961, having been written without my help or participation. Subsequently I became aware that this newspaper issue was displayed at those organizations where I had previously given lectures.

And last but not least, I was called to the highest authority—the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—and shown a typescript of one of my lectures that was distributed by someone somewhere without my participation. The officials of the Central Committee who talked with me tried to learn whether or not I had anything to do with this *Samizdat* publication. I replied that I was seeing it for the first time in my life (which was the pure truth—the unknown compiler had included in the record of my speech some additional material that was quite new to me).

All this saga ended with a summons to the Ministry of Higher Education, where another unpleasant talk took place; besides, there occurred some changes in the institute department where I worked (which had nothing to do with the anti-UFO frenzy). As a result, the situation in the institute became somewhat too tense and at the end of February 1961 I left the institute at my own request.

Of course, after the publication of the interview of Academician Artsimovich in *Pravda*, and the subsequent events, there was no opportunity for me to give public lectures any longer. However, I continued to analyze the material collected, as well as to look for theoretical explanations for anomalous phenomena—in particular, on the basis of what may be called *multidimensional physics*. Although it remained for a long time not possible to publish my considerations in scholarly or even popular-science periodicals in this country, the personal exchange of opinions with the few people who remained in those years interested in anomalous phenomena was definitely helpful and encouraging.

Some foreign ufologists also rendered me and my Soviet colleagues very essential help in obtaining UFO reports and special literature from the West. Among these people I would like to name, in particular, René Fouéré, an engineer and General Secretary of the French UFO study group GEPA (Groupement d'Etudes de Phénomènes Aeriens). He was kind enough to send me regularly and gratis the group's journal *Phenomènes Spatiaux*. We communicated for several years, discussing the UFO problem and related questions, and one day in 1968 he asked me if it would be possible to publish our correspondence in the journal, including my conception of multidimensionality. I had to reply that such a form of publication was not accepted in the USSR and, if this happened, I could have got into a lot of trouble. Therefore, I recommended to M. Fouéré to address his request to the *Novosti* Press Agency (NPA)—so that the organization, in its turn, could charge me with writing an article for GEPA journal. Soon I was called up by the NPA and asked to present the necessary material for publication in France.

When my article "Philosophical aspects of the problem of interplanetary contacts" was ready and presented to the agency, I had to withstand a real battle with the NPA people. Somehow it seemed to them not sufficiently correct in its ideological aspects and definitely not reflecting the supremely important role of Marxist-Leninist philosophy in scientific progress. As a result, the article was somewhat "retouched" at the expense of certain "antiscientific" ideas (that is, ones that contradicted views and theories generally accepted in Soviet science). The "edited" version was published in the March, 1970, issue of *Phenomènes Spatiaux*.

René Fouéré guessed what had happened at the *Novosti* Press Agency and supplied the published article with his comments, based on my letters. In particular, in this way he presented certain postulates of the multi-dimensional model of the universe that contradicted some orthodox theories.

The article evoked great interest among the journal's readers, as Fouéré informed me subsequently. For me it was not a secret either, since there started to arrive in my regular mail from abroad invitations to various conferences, congresses, and seminars. Well, every time I replied that I could not attend the meeting due to pressure of work. In fact, I would never have obtained an exit visa, not to mention the funding necessary for such a trip.

In the same year 1970, thanks to the help of Oles' Berdnik, a well-known Ukrainian science-fiction writer, there appeared in the journal *Dnipro* (published in Kiev) my first publication on these matters in this country—the article "No, we are not alone!". Very briefly in it were presented the problems of space contacts from the viewpoint of multi-dimensional physics.

It was only after *perestroika* that I obtained the opportunity to publish my ideas in book form. These are the books: *Anatomy of Miracles* (Moscow: Prometey, 1990), *Reality of the Incredible* (Sverdlovsk: Start, 1991), and the *Encyclopedia of Anomalous Phenomena* (Moscow: Impuls, 1993), of which a new, enlarged, edition was published in 1995.

A STRANGE VISIT... WITH POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

Valeriy A. Kukushkin, Yaroslavl, Russia

Twenty three years ago, in the 30th year of my life, an incident happened to me for which I still have no satisfactory explanation. This event occurred late in September (or, maybe, early in October) of 1979, between midnight and 2 a.m.

At that time I was living together with my parents and a married sister in a flat situated on the ground floor of a five-storey apartment building. Across the street there was a big factory, separated from the building by a sidewalk, a road, a shelter-belt, a highway, and a railroad. I occupied a room some 2.5 x 5 meters in size. The only window in the room faced north, looking on to the factory, and the door led to the room of my parents (see Figs. 1 and 2).

At that time I was keen on painting, anomalistics, technical inventions, astronomy, and paleontology, and therefore my room resembled a mixture of a museum, a studio, and a repair shop. I worked with enthusiasm in the chemical industry, frequently being tasked with experimental work.

The strange incident happened at night. I went to bed at about 10 p.m., since next day I had to work on the morning shift. I think that I heard the clock in the parents' room strike midnight. I was sleeping on the bed, head to the window, or, more precisely, to the portable TV set *Elektronika Ts-401* that was located on the bedside table between my bed and the window. The sound system of the TV set did not function after a small accident: being annoyed about the bad quality of the picture (owing to interference from electric trains that often passed by our house), I had once lost my temper and banged on it with my fist.

I awoke due to a strong feeling of danger—a terrible, mortal danger. This feeling was so definite and violent that at the very moment of awakening the instinct of self-preservation went into action: I did not open my eyes, nor moved, still breathing steadily. My mind was working swiftly and effectively (generally, in critical situations I think coldly and quickly, often finding non-standard ways out and feeling fear only in retrospect). Obeying the voice of reason and instinct, I began to open my eyes slowly and carefully. The room was well seen: the light of a bright street-lamp penetrated through the blind.

Still not moving, I examined the space in front of myself: there was nothing terrible, but the feeling of extreme danger did not disappear. Utterly confused, I remained in bed, fearing something indefinite. Then I understood that the source of danger was situated at the back. Very slowly, trying not to provoke the terrible thing hiding somewhere behind my head, I began turning, leaning on my left elbow. My right arm was moving to the left, lying across my chest. Having finished the turn, I froze in complete surprise: what I saw had no explanation at all.

I knew well my portable TV set with its protruding antenna, grey screen bound with black plastic, tuning knobs, the lattice of the loudspeaker, and light yellowish-grey case. Now it looked completely different. Neither its size, nor contours changed, but it now looked like a stone monolith of greenish-grey color. And right in the center of the "screen" there stuck out a small semicircular cap consisting of a transparent substance; it was of about 3 cm in diameter and jutted out from the "screen" to the same distance. Behind the cap (maybe even far behind it, and definitely *not in* the cap) I could see some "dense and viscous" light of crimson-red color that did not illuminate anything in the room.

If I had seen behind myself a terrible killer with an axe in hand, I would have known *how* I should have behaved. But what I saw in reality was so far beyond the bounds of common sense that I was simply taken aback. The sweat stood out on my forehead. Being completely unable to realize what was happening I stared inanely at the "TV set" and the "cap" for 20–30 seconds, having no idea what I should do. I could think of nothing better to do than to lie back. When lying, my left arm stretched along my body, whereas my right arm remained on my chest.

The feeling of danger did not disappear. I lay, being drenched in sweat and inanely staring into space. Suddenly, at my feet, in the space between the low back of the bed and another bedside table, there occurred a swift motion: a small being impetuously ran over my legs and sat down on my belly, before my right arm. I cannot estimate its full height, since it ran to me as if on all fours, and after settling down on my belly it was sitting in a squatting position. In this position, its height was some 30–35 centimeters; so, its full height might be some 50 to 55 cm. It looked like a small human being. Not a child or a monkey, but just a small human being, notwithstanding minor differences in proportions.

It sat down on my abdomen and slightly leaned forward stretching out its left hand forward and downward in a natural gesture. Its fingers clung to my right arm lying on my chest. This made me feel sick, as if a frog had touched me. I remember well the prehensility of the fingers of this strange being: anyone who has had a bird

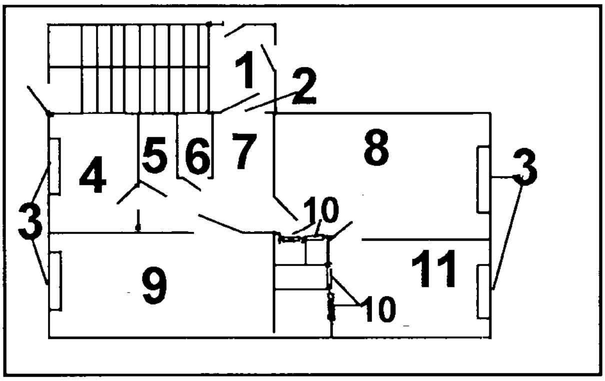


Fig. 1. Floor plan of V. A. Kukushkin's flat (credit: V. A. Kukushkin).
1 – landing; 2 – entrance; 3 – windows; 4 – kitchen; 5 – bathroom; 6 – lavatory; 7 – hall; 8 – parents' room; 9 – sister's room; 10 – larders; 11 – V. A. Kukushkin's room.

perch on his or her finger can imagine how prehensile were they. The manikin was staring intently into my eyes. From this moment on, I too was looking only into its eyes; everything else was perceived by peripheral vision at best. That is why I saw relatively little. For instance, I am absolutely unaware if it had any footwear on its feet.

However strange it may seem, but the feeling of danger has vanished. I was not afraid of this being, clearly realizing that it was intelligent, and having no misgivings about its behavior. At the same time, I felt myself ready for any possible surprise. The being weighed not more than a three-liter jar with water and I could have thrown it down with my right arm—but until the very end of this encounter I had no wish to act in such a way.

The face of the being was fascinating indeed. Its head was disproportionately large in relation to its body—like a child's one. It was globular on top and slightly narrower beneath. Its eyes were rather large, elongated, "horse-like" (that is, entirely dark). The bridge of its nose was hollow and the nostrils protruding. The mouth was long, having no lips. The ears were large, round, and prominent. The face was grey-greenish in color. I do not remember any hair on its head, nor any headgear. The being's clothes appeared to be close-fitting, of some indeterminate color. It looked as if there was also a stand-up collar, like on old full dress coats. In general, its face could have looked funny—but I definitely was in no mood for fun. The main thought remained the same: I must not lose vigilance, I had to be ready for anything!

The being looked at me for five to ten seconds. Then it leaned somewhat lower and extended its hand in a purely human gesture, holding its palm upwards. And it began to speak, moving the hand up and down, as if trying to help me to comprehend its speech (see Fig. 3). The being's voice was expressionless, low and somewhat dryish; it uttered the only sound, something in

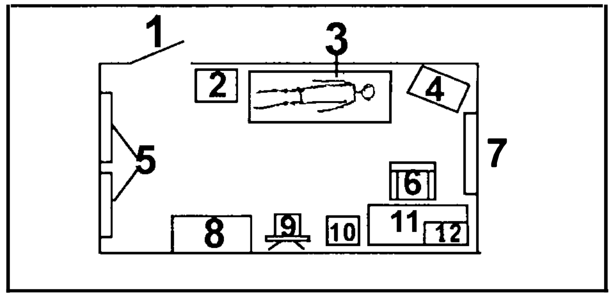


Fig. 2. Floor plan of V. A. Kukushkin's room (credit: V. A. Kukushkin).
1 – door; 2 – bedside table with a record-player; 3 – bed; 4 – bedside table with a TV set; 5 – larders; 6 – armchair; 7 – window; 8 – chiffonier; 9 – easel; 10 – chair; 11 – desk; 12 – aquarium.

between "a" in the word "bad" and "e" in the word "men". The sound was pronounced now as a short vowel, now as a longer one, in series containing sequences of shorter and longer vowels. These sequences ("words") were separated from each other by brief intervals. I could not see if the being's lips were moving when it was speaking. In general, its speech much resembled the Morse code.

We looked at each other, straight in the eye. Seeing that I did not understand anything, the homunculus stepped a little over my belly, approaching closer, and leaned its head still lower. It restarted its speech, accompanying it with the same waving motions of its right hand. The latter was quite close to my face, but I cannot say how many fingers it had.

The new speech remained for me as incomprehensible as the first. The being seemed to be irritated about this, and stopped talking. Now our faces were very close, at a distance of about 25 cm. The right hand of the being still was swinging in front of my left ear. There followed one more attempt to communicate with me "verbally", the being's irritation about my stupidity being felt by me rather distinctly. Its face approached mine still closer and I had to brace the muscles of my right arm and to begin pushing the homunculus back. It stopped talking again. Now a thought flashed through my mind: I am looking at this entity, being unaware what it may undertake in its growing irritation—but I forgot about the mysterious "TV set" behind my head! It is another potential source of danger and therefore I am between two fires...

Not losing sight of the being's eyes, I pressed against it still more insistently with my right arm. The homunculus shifted some five centimeters, slightly moving aside from me. I began to bring my left hand, that was lying along my body, slowly to my chest, simultaneously lifting a little my head and turning it to the left. I still had the being's face in sight, nevertheless. And at the moment when I attempted to sharply turn my head back, the homunculus rushed in the direction of my feet so rapidly that I, still not

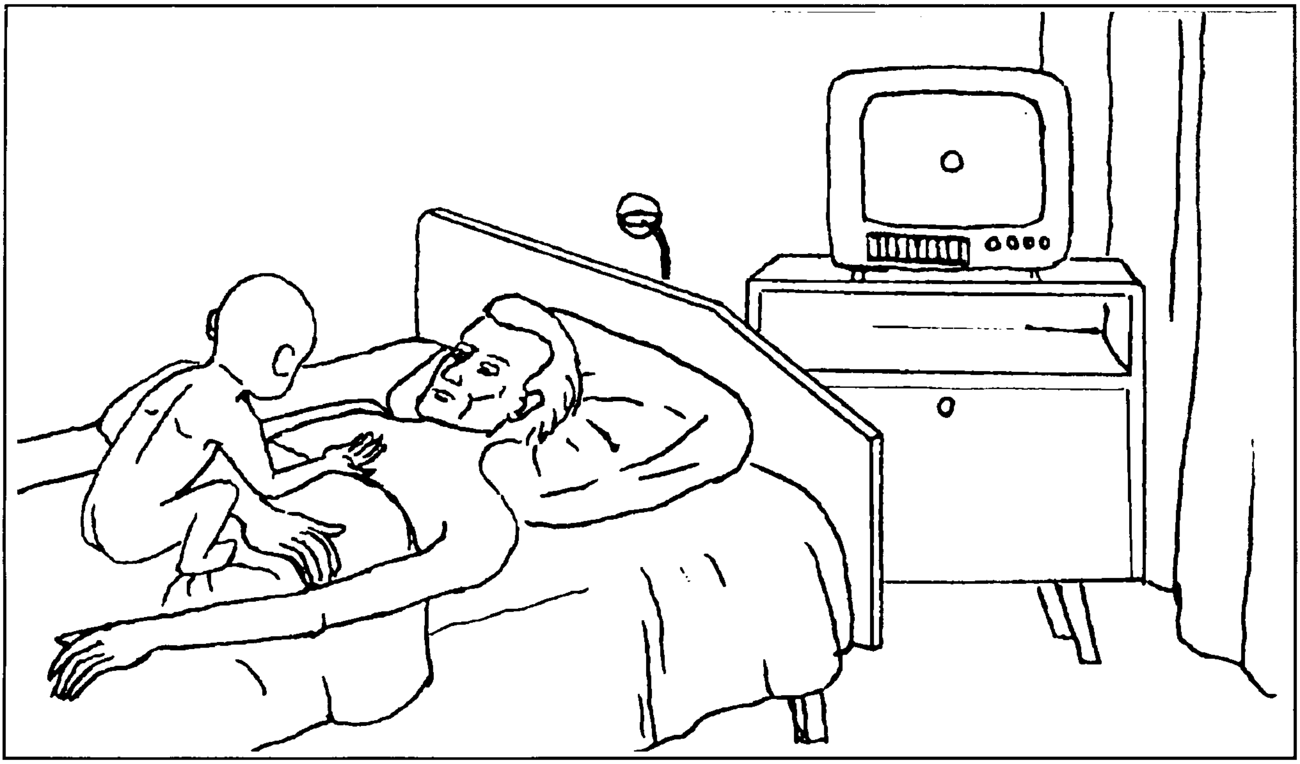


Fig.3. The visit (credit: V. A. Kukushkin).

seeing the "TV set", had to cast a glance in the same direction. However, the homunculus had vanished! Having half risen and swiftly looking back, I saw there the mundane *Elektronika Ts–401* TV set. Instinctively I was at this time holding my right arm suspended in mid-air, trying not to "dirty" myself and my bed by that part of the arm that had been touched by the strange being.

Having gotten up, I used the elbow of my right arm to turn on the light in my room and opened the door to the parents' room (they were still sleeping). Then I went out (tightly closing the door behind myself—so that the being could not escape) to the bathroom, thoroughly washed my arm with soap and returned to my room. I did not feel any special agitation or astonishment, just wishing to examine the room and find the being. But my search, however painstaking, was in vain. Keeping remarkable peace of mind (subsequently it greatly astonished me), I returned to bed and fell quickly asleep: at 7 a.m. I had to be at work.

Next day after the event, in the evening, when examining my TV set, I discovered that its sound system was again working normally!

***

From that night on, my attitude to the incident remained for a long time rather ambivalent. On the one hand, I clearly realized that I had met with something highly unusual, remembering the event very well and believing that every detail of it would for ever remain in my memory. But on the other hand, this incident did not interest me especially, nor astonished me too much. I could recall it at will, or not recall. For me, the incident was at the same time truly uncommon and ordinary, however strange this may sound. I did not flatter myself with the hope that it would repeat, but if it had repeated, I would not have been surprised. In no way did the incident make me consider myself as a "chosen" one; at the same time, I was quite aware that I had touched something potentially fraught with new knowledge.

Very rarely did I talk about this event with other people. The main reason for that was rather simple: everything seemed to indicate that such incidents were not frequent and therefore what had happened to me was a very personal ("intimate", so to speak) experience.

Incidentally, although it was as far back as 1967 that I began to collect information on the UFO phenomenon that from time to time appeared in the Soviet press, at the time of the incident I knew nothing about the humanoids. Only two months later did I become aware that strange human-like beings are another of ufology's objects of study, apart from UFOs as such. This was a result of reading the paper "UFOs and ufonauts in the light of folklore studies", by Valeriy Sanarov, published in the journal *Tekhnika–Molodyozhy*, 1979, No. 11.

Over several years my attitude to the above-described event has, however, changed considerably: from indifference I moved on to curiosity, to interest, and to analysis. One of the reasons for that was intensification of my extrasensory

abilities. As far back as my childhood these were not that bad: I could "see" by fingers when I was 10–13 years old, and two years later a friend of mine and I studied hypnotism and experimented with the Rhine ESP cards (my percentage of successful guesses was unusually high). Also we practiced auto-suggestion techniques, so that afterward I even performed some experiments on myself—sometimes rather foolish ones (for example, I relieved a toothache—and the tooth disintegrated)... Besides, I could effectively control the function of my heart: being an amateur diver, I slowed down its systolic rate, as a result being able to remain under water for up to five minutes.

After the visit of the "homunculus" there however appeared new—and much more unusual—abilities. Of course, "after" does not necessarily mean "due to"—so, I do not insist that these were direct consequences of the incident. And nonetheless... For instance, when being irritated by somebody's presence and twaddle, I started to sense the presence of something like a long massive "crowbar" of about four centimeters in diameter that gradually advanced from a point located between my eyes (somewhat higher, in fact)—whose length eventually reached some two meters. This mass was felt quite distinctly; it did not hinder me—but I had a feeling that it could be very dangerous to my companions. Therefore I tried not to "touch" anybody with this "crowbar" and felt rather embarrassed.

Unfortunately, my self-control proved not always to be effective enough. Thus, after one exceptionally hectic working night (at that time I held a position as a chief of a shift at a chemical plant, and on that night technical problems occurred much too often) it so happened that a colleague utterly irritated me. At that moment I was in my office, sitting at a desk and making notes in an operation log. Unable to control myself, I felt the invisible "crowbar" advancing from my forehead and began to slowly lift my eyes—keeping however the "instrument" a little to the side of her head. When our eyes met, she stopped talking and stiffened in fright. I looked at her in perplexity. At the same moment there was heard a brief but loud hissing sound—*p-sh-sh-sh!*—and the woman disappeared! Immediately after that, I heard her heels rattling downstairs behind the closed door of my office.

Struck dumb by this unbelievable occurrence, I was for some time sitting at the desk in complete stupor. The door was still closed. Then it opened and there came the chief of the next shift. I told him about the technical problems that we had encountered during that night, finished making notes, took a shower and went home. After having a good sleep, I thought for a long time over this episode, finding no explanation for it.

At 10.45 p.m. I was sitting again in my office, at the same desk, running a routine pre-shift briefing. Both I and that woman avoided looking at each other. I felt that she could not understand *how* she had found herself beyond the closed door, but could not bring herself to ask me about this. I also hesitated to start discussing this question with her. Later, we never touched on it.

On August 14, 1985, I visited Dr. Felix Y. Zigel [Assistant Professor at Moscow Aviation Institute, the "father of Soviet ufology"—*RB Editor*] in his Moscow flat. He heard me out with attention (subsequently we met more than once, as well as communicated by mail and phone) and advised me to contact Alexander Kuzovkin [an engineer-physicist, a prominent Russian ufologist who collected a vast amount of information on UFO and humanoid sightings in the former USSR—*RB Editor*] The latter listened to the first part of my story, but when I proceeded to the description of the "homunculus", he said me: "Please, wait a little" and left the room. Returning, he showed me a bound typescript, where there were also some pictures. Pointing at one of them, Kuzovkin asked me: "Did the being that came to you look like one of these?" On that picture I saw two small creatures standing in the opening of a door. They did resemble my "guest", but instead of clothes their bodies were covered with short hair.

Kuzovkin briefly outlined the circumstances of this case. These two creatures visited for several consecutive nights a young man having a passion for painting. They sat down on his bed and massaged the heart area. At that time the young man felt himself paralyzed. Each time, before leaving, the creatures informed him that they would return again. After their last visit the young man had a heart attack and was hospitalized. As it turned out, he needed a complicated operation with a very uncertain prognosis. But fortunately, the operation ended quite successfully—which even surprised the physicians themselves. The young man has survived. But it remained unknown, whether the massage performed by the strange beings drove him to the operation, or it helped him to survive.

"Were you paralyzed when the homunculus was sitting on your belly?"—Alexander Kuzovkin asked me. "No,—replied I,—if I had wished, I could have used my arm to throw it down to the floor. But I did not wish to behave in such a way, since I understood it was an intelligent being."

***

In conclusion, I ought to say that the case has after all remained quite incomprehensible to me. I do not hurry to explain it with the help of beautiful but unsubstantiated hypotheses about "parallel worlds", "higher dimensions", etc. To my mind, these suppositions have at present no firm basis under them. Therefore, having described this event in detail, I can consider my main task fulfilled.

CHARLES FORT IN THE 21st CENTURY

Yuriy N. Morozov

Charles Fort is one of those popular authors from whom many people quote, but only few read in full. Recently Russian readers also have acquired the opportunity to get acquainted with the true Fort. Less than a hundred years after the *Book of the Damned* was published (1919), it has at last appeared in a Russian translation.* Henceforth in this country, anyone who wishes to form his or her personal opinion about this famous American writer needs no longer rely only on odd quotations from Fort's books.

Here I would like to share my impressions gained from this book.

The widespread opinion that Charles Fort was a mere collector of facts ignored by science is definitely far from the truth. First and foremost, Charles Fort was a philosopher. Probably, comparing his views with those of other thinkers, it would have been possible to find for him a proper place among some "...ists" or "...eans". But first of all, thanks to his literary style (really dreadful, one should admit!), he is absolutely unique. ...And also indeed a loner, as was so truly noticed in the introduction to his book by Tiffany Thayer. It was only after the book had been published that there appeared the "forteans". Yet they have inherited from Fort anything but his philosophy.

Charles Fort himself defined his views as "monism", but I would like to give it another name—ultra-relativism (or ultra-conventionalism). Everything in the world is relative,—states Fort; no thing can be differentiated from another one with an absolute certainty; "everything that is, also isn't". Our knowledge about the world is also only relative. The main trait of Fort's way of thinking may be expressed as follows: he never states that a certain thesis is true, he just accepts it—conventionally, for some time only. This is closely connected with Fort's clear understanding of the role played in science by successive paradigms (in his terms—dominants). "Development is an Autocracy of Successive Dominants..."—writes he, adding that "the Dominants are jealous gods": any scholar, however eminent, has to submit to them.

In Fort's times it was the doctrine of *exclusionism* that was prevailing—just as it is still reigning today. The facts that did not correspond to the Procrustean bed of accepted scientific conceptions fell a prey to this doctrine. It was preceded by the religious dominant, with even more rigorous limitations. Fort puts forth a new dominant—that of *"inclusionism"*—opening a way for incorporating the facts rejected—or "damned"—by science. Yet even this dominant, according to him, will be replaced, in due course, by another, more general, world view. This concept does not look obsolete even today, does it? And what a sound, truly philosophical attitude to the author's own ideas!

Tiffany Thayer, who was well acquainted with Fort in his lifetime, asserted that the latter never did believe in his own astounding hypotheses. One can agree with this statement. Explanations proposed by Fort for the "damned" facts are just a mind-game, more often than not a provocative one. Sometimes Charles Fort displays this layer of his writings, enveloping his "hypotheses" in obviously buffoonish clothes—for example, when explaining the "strange howling noises" in the air that were heard at Palermo in 1817 as a flight of cosmic "super-wolves", or declaring the small shining bodies seen in the sky in 1863 to have been Muhammad and his harem. In other cases, Fort emphasizes an utterly conventional character of his explanations, scattering them lavishly. For instance, when discussing the nature of the objects that crossed the sun's disk during October 17 and 18, 1870, he calls them "angels, ragamuffins, crusaders, emigrants, aeronauts, or aerial elephants, or bison or dinosaurs". But more often than not Fort gives his readers no prompt or wink, expressing his opinions with an exaggerated seriousness. This alienated a lot of his readers and potential followers. Is there, after all, any sense in paying attention to an author who talks absolute nonsense, using such Jesuitically pretentious language?!

But Charles Fort *was* serious—even though this seriousness was hidden at a much deeper level of his considerations! He outlined the problems that do in fact exist. And his hypotheses are not devoid of logicality—at least, they are more logical than explanations proposed by the "exclusionists".

A good half of the *Book of the Damned* is devoted to reports about various objects and even living beings falling from the sky. Such reports are too numerous to ascribe them to eyewitnesses' fallibility. At the same time, Fort convincingly rebuts the hypothesis according to which these falling objects had been previously taken up by aerial whirlwinds. Many of these objects are just too heavy to float in the air for whole days and even weeks. Then, whence do they fall? Let's think logically,—replies Fort. Things similar to the cargoes transported by

* Fort Ch. *1001 Forgotten Miracles: The Book of the Damned*. St.Petersburg: Lan' Publishers, 1997.

terrestrial ships do evidently fall from alien sky ships. A gelatinous substance falls to the earth from gelatinous areas of the sky, chunks of ice from the ice fields located over our planet, and the fish from the sky ponds. As for the blood that from time to time pours from the sky, it is a trace of cosmic battles or crashes of space ships. "Don't you agree? Then propose your own explanations—but please do not ignore these facts!"—Fort could have said to the scientific establishment, if he had wished to converse normally with the latter, instead of simply to tease it with his wild fantasies. One should admit that even almost a century after, the Fort's fundamental position seems not to have been shaken. Obviously, nobody will today seriously discuss most of his "hypotheses"—but do we have any more convincing or at least more logical explanations for the facts he cites?

Charles Fort was essentially ahead of his time in his appeals to what may be called, in today's terms, "the cosmization of thinking". All concrete ideas of Fort's are an expression of open protest against the centuries-old habit of considering the Earth as a planet isolated from outer space and therefore not subject to any cosmic influences during its history. Now, let us take a look at the following—really astonishing for the year 1919!—ideas that may be found among the phantasmagorias of his book:

- Terrestrial life has a cosmic origin. What is more, its further evolution "has been induced by external influences", quite possibly by intelligent ones. "Evolution, as a whole, upon this earth, has been a process of population by immigration or by bombardment"—that is, new species of animals has been from time to time sent to this planet. However awkwardly this hypothesis has been presented in Fort's book, let us remember that in science the idea that life had been artificially carried to the Earth became a legitimate subject for discussion only in the 1970s.

- Alien intelligent beings maintain contacts only with some chosen individuals and with certain secret societies on the Earth. Humankind as a whole does not interest them. For them we are just "bugs and germs", "pigs, geese, cattle". Several decades had passed before other thinkers also came to the conclusion that the lack of open, "official" contacts with extraterrestrials might be explained just in this way, however insulting for us humans it may look.

- There exist in the Universe "dirigible worlds" and/or artificial constructions of planetary size. When translated into modern language, it means that Fort was speaking of astroengineering—long before Dyson, O'Neill, and others. In this sense the only spiritual contemporary of Fort was Konstantin Tsiolkovsky.

Without any exaggeration, Charles Fort must be considered as the first ufologist in world history. He gathered a very rich collection of UFO observations in the atmosphere and space before the 20th century (even if the very term "UFO" was coined much later), interpreted these objects as extraterrestrial beings' means of transport that could move in space, the atmosphere, and water. And touching upon the mysterious disappearances of people, he dropped with significant reticence an idea that, according to him, should not be taken up in detail in this book: "I think that we're being fished for." As a matter of fact, the problem of possible alien abductions became a disturbing subject of discussion only half a century later...

And, last but not least, Charles Fort can be rightfully named as one of the founding fathers of paleovisitology. A significant part of his book deals with those remnants of the past, archaeological and geological finds, that may be evidence of extraterrestrial visitations to the Earth in ancient times. Again and again, Fort repeats the same idea: we were visited by various alien beings, they having different aims and models of behavior. "...I accept that, in the past... inhabitants of a host of other worlds have—dropped here, hopped here, wafted, sailed, flown, motored—walked here, for all I know—been pulled here, been pushed; have come singly, have come in enormous numbers; have visited occasionally, have visited periodically for hunting, trading, replenishing harems, mining; have been unable to stay here, have established colonies here..." Here used to arrive giants who left after them megalithic constructions such as Stonehenge, and "ambitious dwarfs"; Super-Tamerlanes committed all kinds of outrages on this planet and stellar missionaries propagated here their teachings; sometimes earthlings resisted these high-handed visitors and there started on the Earth devastating wars, in which "heavenly weapons" were used... Today all this is being read as a draft of those scenarios of paleovisits and paleocontacts that have appeared in the works of supporters of the Ancient Astronaut theory, starting from the 1960s.

But even now we remain ignorant as to whether or not the space visitors did participate in the history of our planet and our civilization. Unidentified flying objects are still rushing over our heads and pieces of ice and strange substances are still falling from the sky. Factually, none of the problems raised by Charles Fort has been as yet solved. And therefore, this jaundiced critic of science, long-sighted visionary and fantast, will continue to tease us through the 21st century.

EDITOR: Vladimir V. Rubtsov
RIAP
P.O.Box 4542
61022 Kharkov-22
UKRAINE

E-mail: <riap777@SoftHome.net>